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Impaired Driving in Alberta

A Seven Year Perspective 1984 to 1990

Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL
Motor Vehicles Division

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Message from the Minister

In the past seven years, significant progress has been made in Alberta in reducing the incidence of impaired driving and the associated traffic collisions. I am as committed to continuing to make our streets and highways safe from impaired drivers as was my predecessor, the Honourable R.S. (Dick) Fowler, Q.C., in his term as Solicitor General.

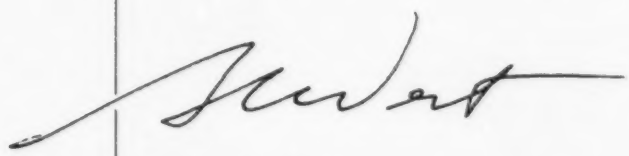
When my department began its impaired driving initiatives, we realized that government could not resolve this problem alone. Addressing this serious social issue has required the close cooperation of law enforcement agencies, business and community groups and the public. Since these programs were initiated, the work and energy of all these groups and agencies has begun to show an effect.

The report, *Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Seven Year Perspective*, documents this progress through a review of the trends in drinking and driving between 1984 and 1990. The study suggests that there has been a significant decrease in the incidence of impaired driving. This perception is reinforced by enforcement data which shows that between 1984 and 1990 the rate of criminal code charges laid as a result of Checkstops had fallen from 114 to 57 per 10,000 vehicles stopped.

The reduction in the occurrence of drinking and driving is accompanied by a corresponding decline in the number of traffic collisions involving alcohol. For example, the number of people killed per year in alcohol-related collisions has fallen by about 27 percent since 1984.

In addition to the trend analysis, the report also reviews the programs that have been effective in reducing impaired driving. Programs in the areas of enforcement, education, prevention, community action and research have proven successful in combatting the impaired driving problem.

My department, the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee and other key stakeholders are committed to continuing the fight against drinking and driving. Working together, we can make Alberta's streets and highways safer.



Stephen C. West
Solicitor General

March 1992

I Executive Summary

Impaired driving is a problem which affects all Albertans. In response to the concerns of citizens, the Department of the Solicitor General initiated a program of impaired driving countermeasures to reduce the incidence of this crime.

Collision Fatalities and Injuries

1. In 1984, 33 percent of all traffic collisions in Alberta were alcohol-related. By 1990, that figure had been reduced to 28 percent. The number of alcohol-related fatal collisions has decreased by 24.8 percent between 1984 and 1990. Alcohol-related injury collisions declined by 19.3 percent in the same period.

2. The number of people killed in alcohol-related collisions was reduced by 27.3 percent between 1984 and 1990, from 154 to 112, respectively.

3. Between 1984 and 1990, alcohol-related injuries decreased from 4,009 in 1984 to 3,084 in 1990, representing a 23.1 percent decrease.

4. Involvement of drinking drivers in fatal or injury collisions declined slightly between 1984 and 1990. The number of drinking drivers involved in fatal collisions decreased from 26.4 percent to 22.1 percent, while drinking drivers involved in injury collisions declined from 11.2 percent to 9.4 percent.

5. The 25 to 29 age group accounted for the greatest portion of drinking drivers in fatality and injury collisions. However, when the number of licensed drivers is controlled, the 18 to 19 age group emerges as having the highest rate (3.1) of drinking drivers involved in fatality and injury collisions per 1,000 licensed drivers. This age group also experienced a 32.6 percent decline in the rate of involvement, from 4.6 per 1,000 licensed drivers in 1984, to 3.1 per 1,000 licensed drivers in 1990.

Enforcement Data

1. The number of people charged with impaired driving in Alberta decreased by 31.6 percent from 1984 to 1990. This decrease was the second largest in Canada for that period.

2. Alberta's rate of persons charged with impaired driving is the second highest in Canada (excluding the territories), at 689 per 100,000 population.

3. Although the number of vehicles stopped through the Checkstop Program increased between 1984 and 1990, the rate of criminal code charges laid as a result of this activity has decreased. The rate of criminal code charges has declined sharply from 114 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1984, to 57 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1990.

4. The number of driver licence suspensions occurring under the *Motor Vehicle Administration Act* declined by 32 percent between fiscal years 1985-86 and 1990-91. The proportion of drivers whose licences were suspended for a repeat offence fell from 33 percent in 1988 to approximately 29 percent in 1990.

5. The number of offenders incarcerated in Alberta correctional centres for impaired driving offences increased between fiscal years 1985-86 and 1990-91. Specifically, a 67.8 percent increase in the number of incarcerated offenders occurred between 1985-86 and 1990-91.

6. Sentence lengths have increased in the "over 1 year" and "less than 1 month" categories. The number of drivers receiving sentences in the remaining categories of "1-3 months", "3-6 months" and "6-12 months" has decreased between 1985-86 and 1990-91.

What Has Been Accomplished

The Department of the Solicitor General has taken a leading role in Alberta in developing and implementing impaired driving countermeasures. More than 20 initiatives have been introduced in the past four years to reduce the incidence of impaired driving. These initiatives are part of a multifaceted approach involving prevention, education and enforcement.

As part of its continued commitment to reduce impaired driving, the Department of the Solicitor General will focus on delivering existing programs that have proven successful in combatting this problem.

Conclusion

The number of alcohol-related fatal and non-fatal injury collisions decreased between 1984 and 1990, as did the resulting deaths and injuries. However, young people are still over-represented in alcohol-related collisions.

The number of impaired drivers detected through Checkstop activity has declined, as has the number of charges laid through routine enforcement. However, the people who are charged face stiffer penalties, particularly in the form of jail terms.

The statistics cited are encouraging, and as such we will continue to deliver current programs that have proven successful in reducing the incidence of impaired driving. Additionally, the Department of the Solicitor General, in cooperation with other government departments, community groups, the private sector and the general public, will continue to evaluate new initiatives aimed at reducing this serious crime.

Although current enforcement initiatives have the greatest visibility, education and awareness programs will remain as priorities.

II Introduction

Impaired driving affects all of us, whether directly -- when friends or family are involved in an alcohol-related collision, or indirectly -- when insurance and health care costs rise due to those collisions.

Society has become increasingly aware of the costs, both social and financial, of impaired driving. In response to concerns expressed by Albertans, the Department of the Solicitor General initiated a series of impaired driving countermeasures to reduce the incidence of this serious problem.

In 1989, the Department produced a report entitled *Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Five Year Perspective (1984 to 1988)*, which detailed the scope of the impaired driving problem and the progress made toward its reduction. Following that document, the purpose of this report is to provide updated information on the incidence of alcohol-related collisions, the resulting casualties, as well as the penalties assessed. Taken together, this information will provide a picture of the progress that has been made in reducing impaired driving in Alberta in the past seven years.

In keeping with the Department's continued commitment to reduce the crime of impaired driving, the report also outlines future initiatives designed to increase the safety of Alberta's highways. To achieve this objective, the Department has assumed a leadership role in coordinating impaired driving initiatives in the Province, bringing together other government departments, community groups, the private sector and special interest groups. The Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee, whose membership is derived from these groups, is responsible for providing direction for research, implementation, and evaluation of new initiatives.

III Magnitude of the Problem and Historical Trends

Between 1984 and 1990, Alberta had the highest rate of impaired driving charges in Canada. Concurrently, alcohol-related fatal collisions accounted for approximately 32 percent of total fatal collisions in the same period. A collision is considered alcohol-related if the attending police officer detects the presence of alcohol in one or more of the drivers in the collision. However, the indication of alcohol involvement on the police collision form does not necessarily indicate that alcohol consumption was the cause or contributed to the collision.[1]

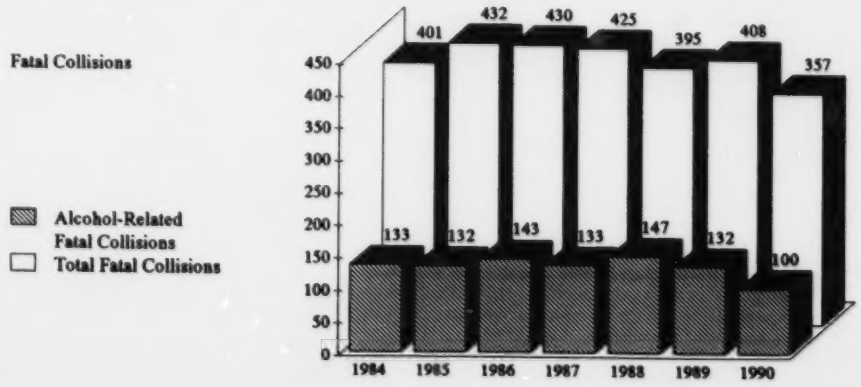
Progress has been made in the past seven years in reducing alcohol-related collisions and the resulting fatalities and injuries. By 1990, the percentage of collisions that were alcohol-related was reduced to 28 percent from 33 percent.

Collision Data

1) Alcohol-Related Fatal Collisions 1984 to 1990

In the seven year period from 1984 to 1990, the number of alcohol-related fatal collisions decreased by 24.8 percent, from 133 in 1984 to 100 in 1990. During the same period, non-alcohol-related fatal collisions decreased by only 4.1 percent.[2]

Figure 1

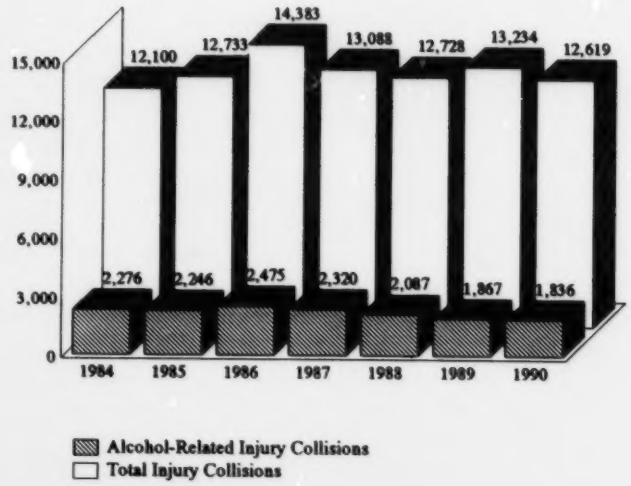


2) Alcohol-Related Non-fatal Injury Collisions 1984 to 1990

Alcohol-related injury collisions declined by 19.3 percent between 1984 and 1990, from 2,276 to 1,836. In comparison, non-alcohol-related injury collisions increased by 9.8 percent during the same period.[3]

Figure 2

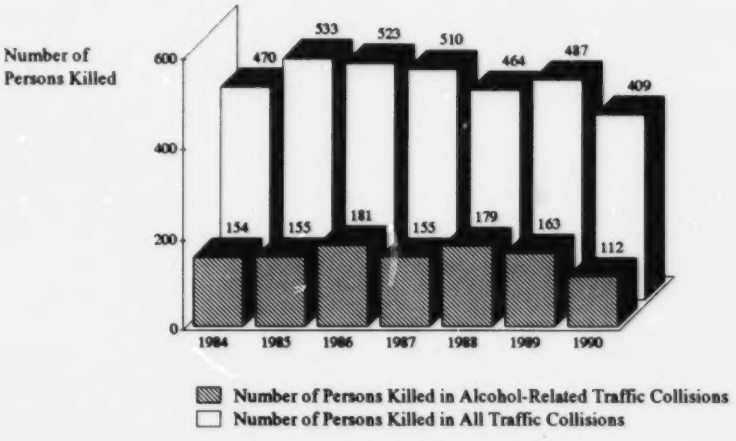
Non-fatal Injury Collisions



3) Number of Persons Killed in Alcohol-Related Collisions 1984 to 1990

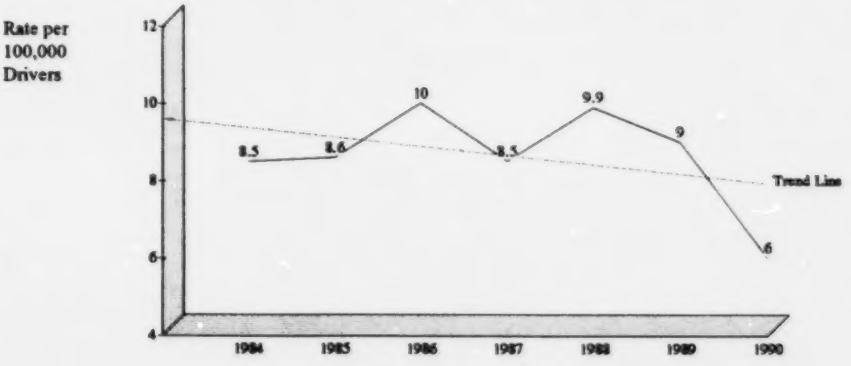
A total of 1,099 people were killed in alcohol-related collisions in Alberta between 1984 and 1990. The number of alcohol-related fatalities per year decreased from 154 in 1984 to 112 in 1990, a 27.3 percent decline.[4]

Figure 3



Although the actual number of licensed drivers increased slightly from 1984 to 1990, the rate of fatalities decreased from 8.5 to 6.0 per 100,000 drivers in that period.[5]

Figure 4

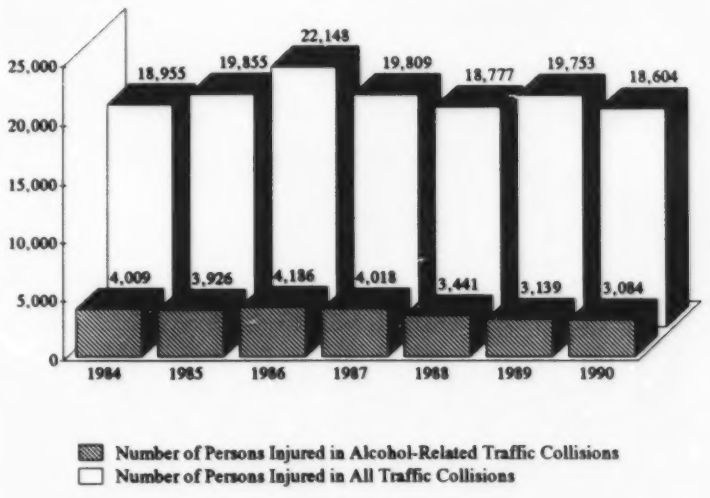


4) Number of Persons Injured in Alcohol-Related Collisions 1984 to 1990

From 1984 to 1990, 25,803 persons were injured in alcohol-related collisions. The number of alcohol-related injuries has decreased by 23.1 percent, from 4,009 in 1984 to 3,084 in 1990.[6] The rate of injuries per 100,000 licensed drivers has decreased from 220 in 1984, to 165 in 1990.[7]

Figure 5

Number of Persons Injured

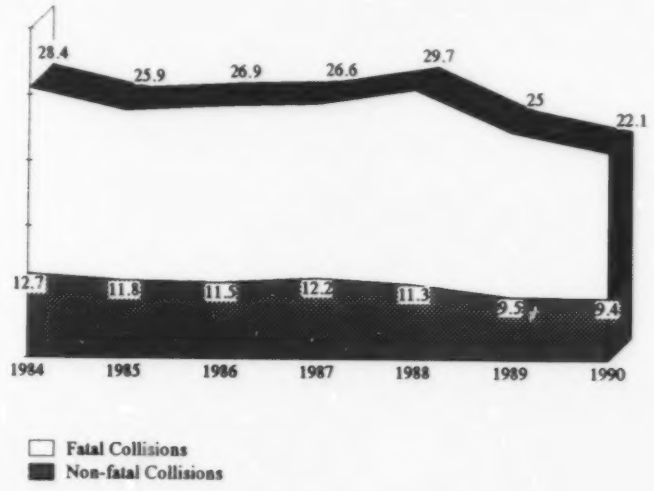


5) Involvement of Drinking Drivers in Fatality and Injury Collisions by Age and Sex - 1990

The number of drivers who had been drinking and involved in a fatal or injury collision in 1990 declined in the seven year period from 1984 to 1990. On average, 26.4 percent of those drivers involved in fatal collisions, whose condition was reported *, had consumed alcohol, and 11.2 percent of those drivers involved in injury collisions had used alcohol. In comparison, the percentages for 1990 were 22.1 and 9.4, respectively. [8]

Figure 6

Percentage of Drivers Involved in Fatality and Injury Collisions Who had been Drinking



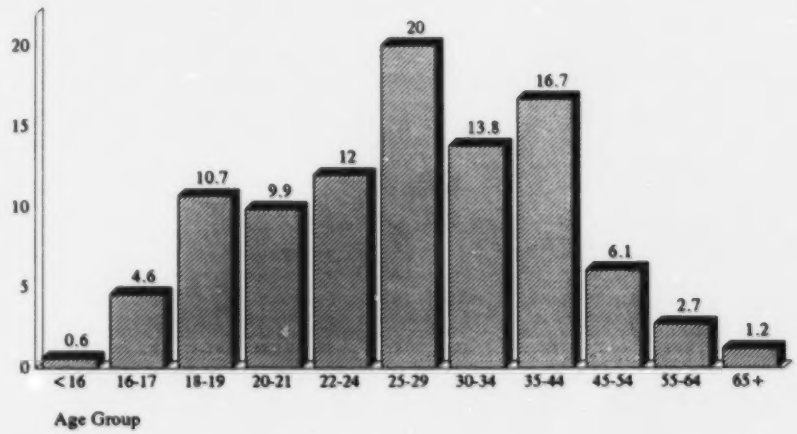
* In some cases, the condition of the driver was not specified on the police report.

6) Number of Drinking Drivers Involved in Fatal and Injury Collisions per 1,000 Drivers by Age and Sex 1984 to 1990

Young drivers continue to be over-represented when compared to older drivers, in alcohol-related collisions. An analysis of fatal and injury collisions in terms of the drivers involved, reveals that 25 to 29 year olds make up the largest portion of drinking drivers. This group has consistently accounted for the highest proportion of impaired drivers between 1984 and 1990, at 20.3 percent and 20.0 percent, respectively.[9]

Figure 7

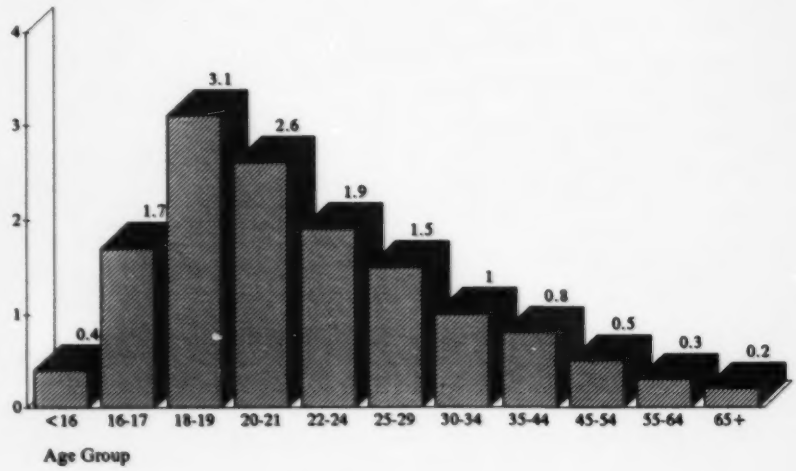
Percentage of Drinking Drivers Involved in Fatality and Injury Collisions in 1990



Although 25 to 29 year olds make up the largest portion of drinking drivers, a more accurate picture emerges when the number of licensed drivers is taken into account. The 18 to 19 age group actually has the highest rate (3.1) of drinking drivers involved in fatality and injury collisions per 1,000 licensed drivers. The 18 to 19 age group also witnessed the largest decline in the number of drivers involved in these types of crashes, falling from 4.6 per 1,000 in 1984 to 3.1 in 1990. This decline was the greatest of any age group. There was no change in the rate of involvement for drivers in the 25 to 29 age category between 1984 and 1990. [10]

Figure 8

Rate of Drinking Drivers in Casualty Collisions per 1,000 Licenced Drivers in 1990



The analysis further revealed that males consistently accounted for 85 percent of drivers involved in alcohol-related collisions in the 1984-1990 period.

7. Summary

Progress has been made in the seven year period from 1984 to 1990 in reducing alcohol-related collisions and the corresponding fatalities and injuries. Both alcohol-related fatal and non-fatal injury collisions have decreased since 1984. Accordingly, the number of people killed and injured in alcohol-related collisions has also decreased. There was a slight decrease in the proportion of drivers involved in fatal or injury collisions that had been drinking. Unfortunately, statistics for Canada as a whole are not available for comparison.

Enforcement Data

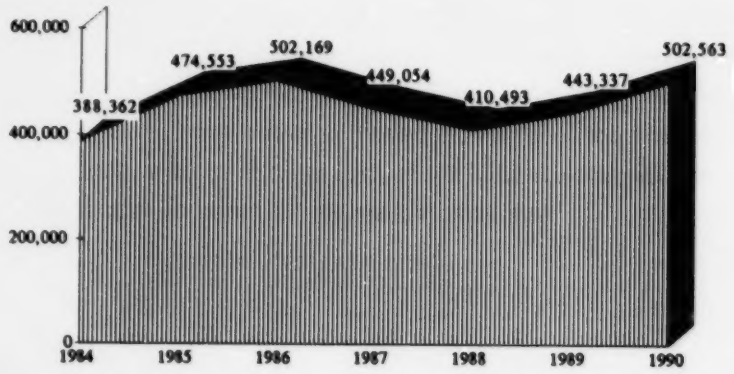
1) The Checkstop Program

Checkstop, which has been in operation since 1973, is a combined enforcement and education program designed to deter persons from drinking and driving and remove impaired drivers from Alberta's roadways.

During the seven year period, an average of 453,000 vehicles were checked per year for impaired drivers at Checkstop locations. In 1990, 502,563 vehicles were checked, compared to 388,362 in 1984.

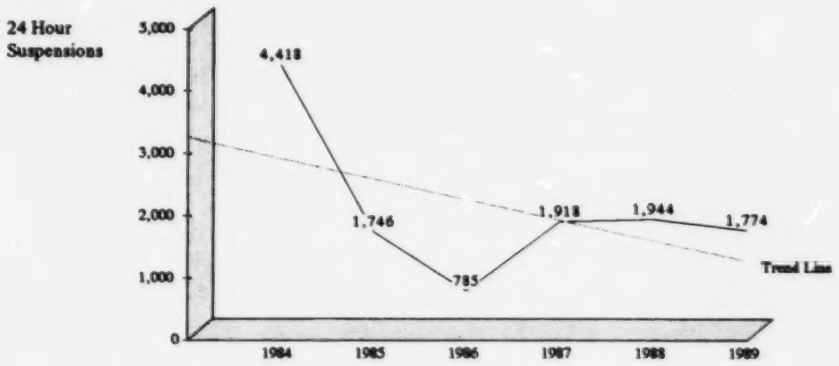
Figure 9

Number of Vehicles Stopped



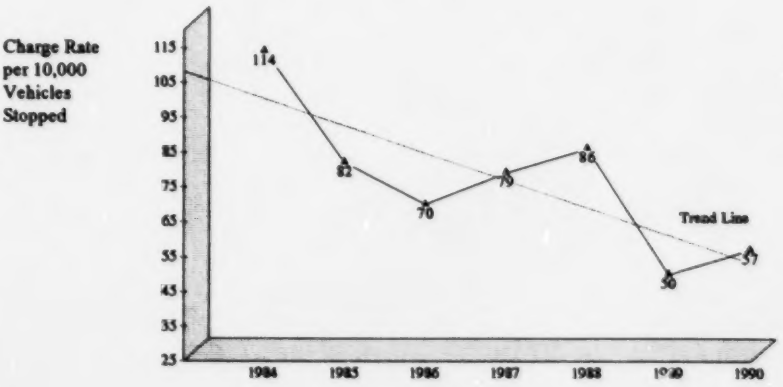
As a result of Checkstop activity, 3,015 24-hour suspensions were issued, and 2,869 impaired driving charges were laid in 1990.

Figure 10



Between 1984 and 1990, the rate of criminal code charges has dropped from 114 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1984 to 57 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1990. This sharp decline suggests that current enforcement efforts are resulting in fewer occurrences of impaired driving. While Checkstops have high visibility and remind the public of the dangers of impaired driving, vehicles that are stopped for other reasons yield the greatest number of impaired driving charges each year.

Figure 11

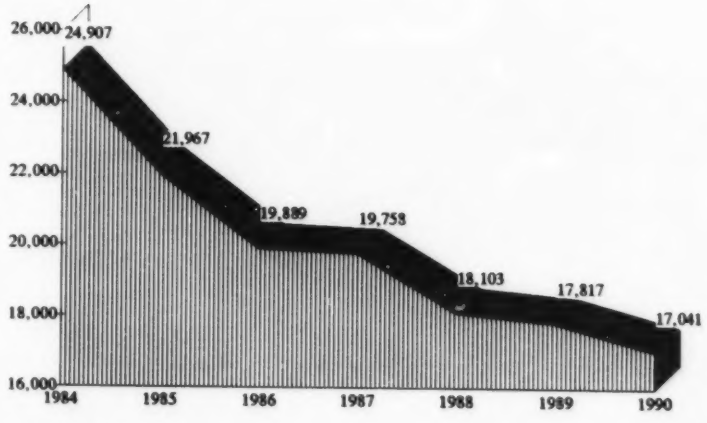


2) Persons Charged with Impaired Driving 1984 to 1990

During the period 1984 to 1990, the number of persons charged with impaired driving in Alberta dropped by 31.6 percent from 24,907 in 1984 to 17,041 in 1990. Of the 17,041 persons charged in 1990, 15 (.09 percent) were charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft causing death; 163 (1.0 percent) were charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft causing bodily harm; 284 (1.7 percent) were charged with failure or refusal to provide a breath or blood sample and 16,579 (97.3 percent) were charged with impaired operation of a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft and driving with a blood alcohol concentration over .08 mg. [11]

Figure 12

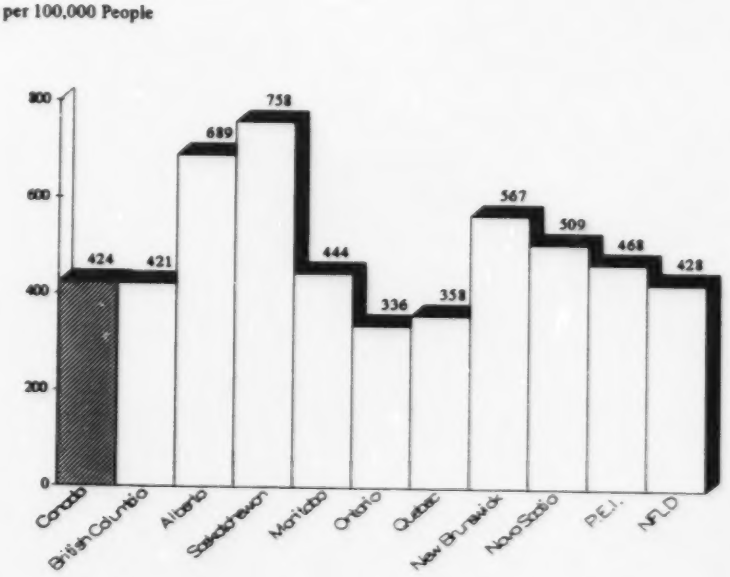
Number of Persons Charged



3) Persons Charged with Impaired Driving, Rate per 100,000 Population, Canada and the Provinces - 1990

Canada, as a whole, recorded a 20.5 percent reduction in the number of persons charged with impaired driving for the same period. Although Alberta's reduction is considerably greater than that of the nation as a whole at 31.6 percent, Alberta had the second highest rate of persons charged for impaired driving for the second year in a row in 1990, at 689 people charged for 100,000 of total population. Prior to that, Alberta had the highest rate each year from 1984 to 1988.[12] This analysis does not include data from the territories, due to their small populations.

Figure 13



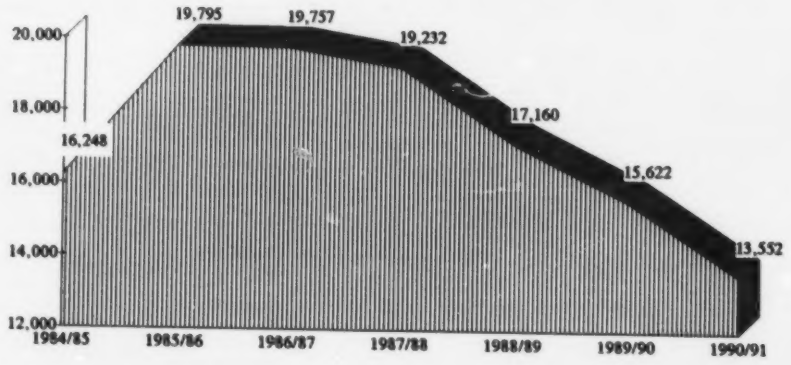
4) Impaired Driving Licence Suspensions

In Alberta, the penalty for impaired driving includes a driver licence suspension carried out under the authority of the provincial *Motor Vehicle Administration Act*. The mandatory driver licence suspension period in Alberta is one year on first conviction, three years on a second conviction, and five years for third and subsequent convictions.

Since 1985-86, the number of licence suspensions has steadily declined. Between the fiscal years 1985-86 and 1990-91, a 32 percent decrease in alcohol-related suspensions occurred. Data for 1984-85 were not used in this analysis because of comparability problems relating to the *Criminal Code of Canada* changes and automated system recording changes.[13]

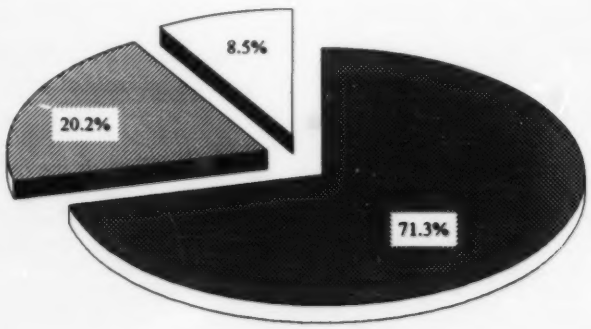
Figure 14

Number of Licence Suspensions



In 1990-91, 13,552 driver licences were suspended for impaired driving offences in Alberta. Of these 13,552 licence suspensions, 9,662 (71.3 percent) were for first offences; 2,741 (20.2 percent) were for second offences and 1,149 (8.5 percent) were for third and subsequent offences. This means that approximately 29 percent of drivers whose licences were suspended for impaired driving were repeat offenders.[14]

Figure 15



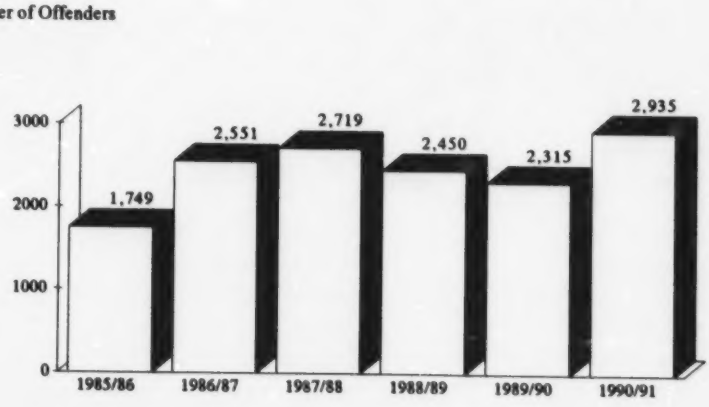
First Offence	9,662
Second Offence	2,741
Third or Subsequent Offences	1,149
Total Suspensions	13,552

5. Impaired Driving Offender Incarceration Data

During the six year period from 1985-86 to 1990-91, the number of offenders incarcerated in Alberta correctional centres for impaired driving offences increased. This increase is a direct contrast to the declining trends already outlined with respect to persons charged with impaired driving and resultanting driver licence suspensions.

The number of offenders incarcerated rose from 1,749 in 1985-86 to 2,935 in 1990-91, representing a 67.8 percent increase. This significant increase in incarceration can be attributed to the willingness of the courts to impose custodial sentences, rather than, or in addition to, fines.[15] On average, 2,453 offenders were sentenced to adult correctional centres for impaired driving, each year between 1985-86 and 1990-91.

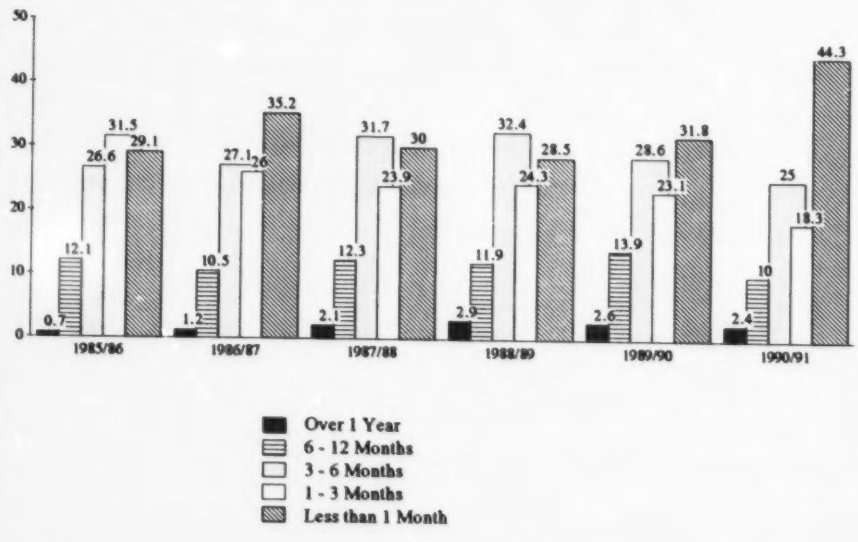
Figure 16



The sentence length data reported here pertain to offenders who were convicted and sentenced for impaired driving offences. The sentence length data indicate that the proportion of sentences of more than one year has increased from 0.7 percent to 2.4 percent. At the same time, sentences of less than one month have also increased, from 29.1 percent in 1985-86 to 44.3 percent in 1990-91. The proportion of sentences in the categories of "1-3 months", "3-6 months" and "6-12 months", has decreased between 1985-86 and 1990-91.[16]

Figure 17

Percentage of Sentenced Admissions for Impaired Driving Offenders



6. Summary

Although the number of vehicles stopped in Checkstops has increased since 1984, the rate of *Criminal Code* charges has decreased significantly, suggesting that enforcement efforts are resulting in fewer occurrences of impaired driving.

The number of impaired drivers apprehended through routine enforcement has also decreased, as has the rate of persons charged with impaired driving per 100,000 people. Between 1984 and 1990, Alberta recorded the greatest decrease in rate of persons charged with impaired driving, although we still have the second highest rate in Canada.

The number of licence suspensions issued for alcohol-related offences has decreased steadily since fiscal year 1985-86.

While impaired driving charges have declined between 1984 and 1990, the number of offenders sentenced to jail terms has increased substantially. This increase is attributable to the willingness of the courts to impose jail terms, instead of, or in addition to, fines.

IV What Has Been Accomplished

Coordination

The Department of the Solicitor General, with responsibility for the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee, and its mandates in the areas of law enforcement, driver management and corrections, has been given the responsibility for coordinating and directing the impaired driving initiatives in Alberta.

Established as an advisory committee to the Solicitor General, the Impaired Driving Countermeasures Committee includes representatives from other government departments, police, community groups, private sector agencies and interest groups and the public at large.

The specific mandate of the committee is to:

1. Conduct research and develop programs to increase the probability of the apprehension and conviction of persons who drive while impaired or who drive while under suspension following an impaired driving conviction;

2. Develop and disseminate public information programs designed to increase public awareness of the legal, economic, social and human consequences of driving while impaired. The Department of the Solicitor General has also enacted legislation which increased licence suspension periods for impaired driving offences.

Enforcement

The Department of the Solicitor General has worked with police agencies throughout Alberta to develop and implement enforcement initiatives aimed at impaired drivers. In particular, emphasis has been placed on increased detection of repeat offenders who are more experienced at concealing their impairment.

Education

The Department of the Solicitor General has both developed and implemented education initiatives and provided funding for other agencies or groups to deliver programming in the area of impaired driving prevention and education.

Research

Research of existing impaired driving countermeasures in other jurisdictions has been an integral component of developing new initiatives. Research is a valuable tool for measuring the success of existing programs, which facilitates program refinement. As well, public opinion surveys have been conducted to determine the areas that should be emphasized in the future.

Countermeasures

The following is a chronological listing of the specific countermeasures that have been initiated to address this serious social problem.

1973
The Checkstop Program

Checkstop is a combined enforcement and education program designed to deter people from drinking and driving. All vehicles passing through a Checkstop location are required to stop for a brief driver check. The police officer then determines whether the driver has been drinking, and may impose a 24-hour suspension or lay *Criminal Code* charges against the driver.

1977
The Alberta Impaired Driving Course

This course was designed by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) as an educational program for impaired drivers. It became a mandatory licence reinstatement condition in 1977. As more research on impaired driving was collected, the course underwent content and format changes, and the course title was changed to "Planning Ahead" in 1986.

1985
IMPACT

An AADAC program, IMPACT (Insight, Motivation, Progress, Assessment, Counselling and Treatment), was introduced as an intensive weekend program for repeat offenders. By the end of 1986, IMPACT had been phased in throughout the province. The program is a mandatory condition of licence reinstatement in Alberta.

1988
Increased Penalties

Legislative changes to the *Motor Vehicle Administration Act* increased the provincial licence suspension periods from 6 months, 12 months, and 3 years to 1 year, 3 years and 5 years, for first, second and third or more offences, respectively.

Tagged... for Life

This program was introduced in conjunction with the University of Alberta Hospital. It was developed as an awareness and education program for young people aged 16-24 who had had their licence suspended. A day was spent in the Injury Awareness and Prevention Centre with patients who had severe head and spinal injuries. The program ran until June of 1990 and is currently being reviewed.

Police Coordinators

The Department funds police coordinators in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and provincially, through the RCMP. The coordinators develop enforcement programs to combat impaired driving in their local areas, make presentations to the community as required and advise the Department of the Solicitor General on new enforcement initiatives.

1989
Checkstop Minivans

Seven additional Checkstop minivans were provided to police services across the province, bringing the total to 17 minivans. These vehicles serve as ''moving billboards'', reminding the public about the Checkstop Program.

Media Campaigns

Billboard signs about Checkstop were erected at strategic sites in Edmonton. Slogans such as ''The Heat is On'', ''The Party's Over'' and

"Sooner or Later, You Will Be Stopped" increase public awareness of the Checkstop Program. Each sign is set up for an eight week period. As well, Checkstop banners were placed on overpasses and Checkstop highway signs were erected at entrances to major cities and at 17 provincial entry points. Signs were also displayed at sports venues and on buses in Edmonton and Calgary. A brochure entitled "The Checkstop Story" was also produced covering the development, implementation and future direction of the Program.

Vehicle Immobilization

A pilot mechanical vehicle immobilization project commenced in two Alberta communities for a five month period. Police officers ordered the installation of an immobilization device in cases where an individual was charged with impaired driving and the officer reasonably suspected that the individual may, within 24 hours, commit a similar offence. After a successful evaluation, the program was expanded to include four additional communities in June 1989.

Impaired Driving Video

In June of 1989 the Department released an impaired driving video entitled, "The Party's Over". The 25 minute video, which portrays the legal, social, economic and human consequences of impaired driving, became compulsory viewing for all new drivers in Alberta on July 1, 1989. Copies of the video were distributed to every junior and senior high school, Motor Vehicles Division office, driving school, police detachment and adult and young offender facility in the province. The video was broadcast nationally on the CTV network on December 1, 1990.

Administrative Licence Suspension

This countermeasure was implemented August 1, 1989 requiring that all cases in which a driver was charged with impaired driving causing bodily harm or death would be immediately referred to the Driver Control Board, to determine whether or not their driving privileges should be suspended, pending the outcome of the case.

Designated Driver Program

Launched in September 1989, this program utilizes the theme "Round Up the Party Animals! Have a Safe Safari Home," to emphasize the separation of drinking and driving. One person from a group of guests at a licensed establishment, social function or private house party is designated as the group's driver, and does not consume any alcohol before, during or after the event. The designated driver accepts the responsibility for making sure the other group members arrive home safely.

Public Survey

During the 1989-90 fiscal year, a public survey was completed to assess knowledge of the impaired driving situation and attitude toward possible countermeasures. Entitled, *Impaired Driving in Alberta: A Survey of the Province's Drivers*, the report was prepared as a result of a survey of 3,000 drivers randomly selected from the computerized files of the Motor Vehicles Division.

1990 Ignition Interlock

A pilot project commenced in April, which allowed the Driver Control Board to order the use of an alcohol sensing device to be installed on the vehicle of a previously convicted impaired driver, as a condition of licence reinstatement. A driver may be eligible for the program after the court imposed suspension, at minimum, has been completed. This technology requires that drivers who have this device to pass a breath alcohol test prior to starting their vehicles.

Impaired Driving Conference

The "International Congress on Drinking and Driving - Effective Strategies for the 90's" was held in Edmonton from March 28 through 30, 1990, and attracted over 400 delegates from across Canada and other countries including the United Kingdom, Australia, Finland, France, Germany, the Bahamas and the United States. The objective of the congress was to showcase effective, operational programs in the impaired driving field. A collection of papers presented at the conference was published in March 1991 under the title *Effective Strategies to Combat Drinking and Driving*.

Grant Funding

Two forms of grant funding are made available to community groups; Department of Solicitor General grants, for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of local activities to discourage drinking and driving, and Health and Welfare grants, with the goal of reducing the social acceptability of impaired driving.

Awards Program

The intent of the Department of the Solicitor General Awards Program is to provide tangible symbols of appreciation and to increase community involvement in reducing impaired driving. The Awards Program includes recognition plaques, certificates of appreciation and the Solicitor General's Award of Merit. Awards are presented to citizens or groups involved either in Department or independent initiatives.

Contract for Life

This is a unique program involving a contract being struck, usually between parents and their children, which sets out rules of conduct by which each party must abide, with respect to drinking and driving. For example, if teenagers are at a party and require rides home, they may contact their parents. Parents agree to provide the ride home without scolding or punishing the teenager for their impairment at the time of the incident. The parents do have the opportunity to discuss the situation at a later date.

1991 Native Programming

Community grants have been provided to Native groups to develop impaired driving programs. For example, in January 1991 the Paul Band Reserve was awarded a grant for the purpose of establishing a community development approach to deal with teenage drinking and driving.

Report An Impaired Driver (RAID)

The objective of this program is to provide special procedures for private citizens to report impaired driving, while the offence is in progress, to police agencies. The program was introduced in June of 1991.

Victim Impact Panel Program

In conjunction with the Correctional Services Division and People Against Impaired Driving (PAID), Motor Vehicles Division implemented a three month pilot Victim Impact Panel Program. Members of PAID, who are also victims of impaired driving, present their stories to inmates incarcerated for alcohol related driving offences. The purpose of the program is to bring impaired drivers face to face with the consequences of this crime. The program is currently being evaluated.

Vehicle Seizure

In December 1991, the Department of the Solicitor General introduced legislation that allows vehicles driven by suspended drivers to be seized and impounded. It should be noted that this program will impact all suspended drivers, rather than just those who have received an alcohol-related driving suspension. It is currently estimated that 41.6 percent (13,552) of the total 32,572 suspensions issued in fiscal 1990-91 were for criminal code alcohol-related driving offences. Therefore, this program has been included as an impaired driving countermeasure.

Research suggests that up to 65 percent of suspended drivers operate their vehicles illegally during the suspension period. The program was introduced to increase the consequences suspended drivers face if they are caught driving illegally.

Enhanced Detection

The Enhanced Impaired Driving Detection Program was implemented as a six month pilot program in Calgary and Edmonton in December of 1991. The Program, the first of its kind in Canada, uses new technology to assist peace officers in making the determination that a driver has consumed alcohol. The new technology, in the form of a passive alcohol sensor, takes a sample of normally exhaled breath with a minimum of intrusion.

If the passive device, together with other observations, provides indications of alcohol use by the driver, an active breath sample using an Alert or Alco-Sur device may be requested. From that point on, the procedures will be identical to those in use at present.

Although Alberta's present Checkstop program is working well, research indicates that the most serious impaired drivers are often the best able to avoid detection in a Checkstop. Chronic alcohol abusers are accustomed to the presence of alcohol in their bodies. They do not show the normal signs of impairment corresponding to their actual blood alcohol levels. In a Checkstop situation, where an officer must make a quick decision on a driver's condition, these serious alcohol abusers may slip through. Passive alcohol sensors will help police identify these individuals, as well as any others who might be tempted to evade detection.

V Conclusion

A review of the available data on alcohol related fatality and injury collisions indicate that collisions due to alcohol have decreased since 1984. Concurrently, the number of people killed and injured in alcohol related collisions has also decreased. Data obtained from police reports indicate that the percentage of drivers involved in fatality and injury collisions who had been drinking declined during the years 1984 to 1990.

Despite the decrease in alcohol-related collisions and the resulting deaths and injuries, impaired driving is still taking its toll on young people. The 18 to 19 age group has the highest rate of drinking drivers involved in fatality and injury collisions, at 3.1 per 1,000 licensed drivers. This group did, however, show the greatest decline in rate of involvement between 1984 and 1990.

During the seven year period, the number of vehicles stopped in Checkstops continued to rise. However, the rate of *Criminal Code* charges issued as a result of the Checkstop activity declined from 114 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1984, to 57 per 10,000 vehicles stopped in 1990. This significant decrease suggests that current enforcement efforts are resulting in fewer occurrences of impaired driving. The number of people charged with impaired driving through routine enforcement declined by 31.6 percent between 1984 and 1990. Correspondingly, the number of suspensions for alcohol-related offences also declined by 32 percent in Alberta.

Although the number of impaired driving charges has decreased, the penalties have become harsher. The number of impaired drivers receiving a jail sentence has increased by 67.8 percent. This significant increase in incarceration can be attributed to the willingness of the courts to impose jail sentences, rather than, or in addition to, fines.

While the overall picture is positive, Alberta still has the second highest rate of impaired driving charges in Canada. In Alberta, 689 people were charged per 100,000 population, compared to 424 people charged per

100,000 population in Canada as a whole. The Alberta rate is, therefore, 62.5 percent above the national rate. This large difference between Alberta's rate and the national average is partly due to Alberta's aggressive Checkstop Program, which operates year round. In addition, local law enforcement agencies work very closely with the Department of the Solicitor General to deal with this serious social problem and as a result, the curtailing of impaired driving remains an enforcement priority. Finally, Alberta has launched a series of new initiatives such as RAID and Enhanced Detection, among others, to make it more difficult for impaired drivers to elude detection.

Based on the trends discussed in this report, the Department of the Solicitor General's efforts to combat impaired driving have met with some success over the last seven years. The progress has been marked by the gradual reduction in the incidence of impaired driving and alcohol-related traffic collisions over that time. Given the improvements to date, the emphasis in the future will be on identifying those programs that are most effective and refining the initiatives.

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